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An Interchange to Serve Megalopolitan Transportation

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An Interchange To Serve Megalopolitan Transportation

Probably no other interchange in the world will serve such a concentration of highway, air, rail and seaport facilities as the facility being constructed by the New Jersey Department of Transportation alongside Newark Airport in the hub of Megalopolis -- the super city which is thriving and growing between Boston and Washington.

Interstate Route 78, Newark Airport, Port Newark, the adjacent New Jersey-New York metropolitan area, the Penn Central Railroad and the Lehigh Valley Railroad, which will be directly or indirectly served by the future interchange, now generate an amount of vehicular movement which would have been beyond comprehension only a few years ago.

The vital role the interchange will play as the "mixing bowl" for these traffic generators can be appreciated when the extraordinary concentration of these facilities is comprehended.

Located within a two-mile area extending east from the interchange is Route U. S. 1 & 9 -- the historic north-south highway which for decades has served as the link between the southeastern states and the Newark-New York area. This highway forms the eastern border of the interchange.

East of Route 1 & 9 is busy Newark Airport, and along the eastern border of the Airport, within a span of several hundred feet, lie the New Jersey Turnpike, freight lines of the Jersey Central Railroad, and Port Newark.

The northern border is Interstate Route 78, to extend across New Jersey into Pennsylvania, and connect with the 42,500-mile interstate system which reaches into every corner of the nation.

The western border is the Penn Central Railroad passenger lines and huge Waverly freight yard.

The southern border is the interchange serving U. S. Routes 21 to Newark and 22 which serve the densely populated and industrialized northeast region of New Jersey.

The interchange itself, one of the largest such facilities in the world, lies astride what might aptly be termed the life-lines of this web of activity. Its construction was dictated by the coming of Interstate Route 78 to the area, but its importance will extend far beyond the demands of that superhighway.

It is designed to serve traffic generated by five major routes which will have a combined average daily flow of more than 572,000 vehicles by 1975.

In particular, its multiple routing combinations will interconnect three of the most heavily traveled arteries in the eastern United States -- Interstate Route 78, Routes 1 & 9, Routes 21 & 22, and the New Jersey Turnpike.

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In all, 26 bridges and one viaduct will be constructed in the interchange complex, which will have 40 miles of traffic lanes within a three-mile curve around the airport. The viaduct, 1,558 feet long and over 200 feet wide will carry I-78 over 40 tracks of the Waverly Yard of the Penn Central Railroad. Estimates are that the viaduct will accommodate a daily average of 110,000 vehicles in 1975.

The ultimate construction cost of the complex will exceed $62 million. One of the contracts awarded, $11,887,906, was one of the highest ever let by the Department of Transportation. To date, five construction contracts have been let totaling $41.7 million. A total of nine construction contracts will have been awarded when the complex is completed.

The problem of maintaining traffic flow during various construction phases in what is one of the most heavily used commuter and commercial corridors in the nation required coordinated planning by the Department of Transportation, the Port of New York Authority, the New Jersey Turnpike Authority, the City of Newark, the U. S. Bureau of Public Roads and the U. S. Weather Bureau.

Transcontinental Interstate Route 78, which will be 10 lanes in the Newark Airport interchange, will carry a daily average of 110,000 vehicles in 1975 and 158,000 in 1985, according to Department of Transportation estimates.

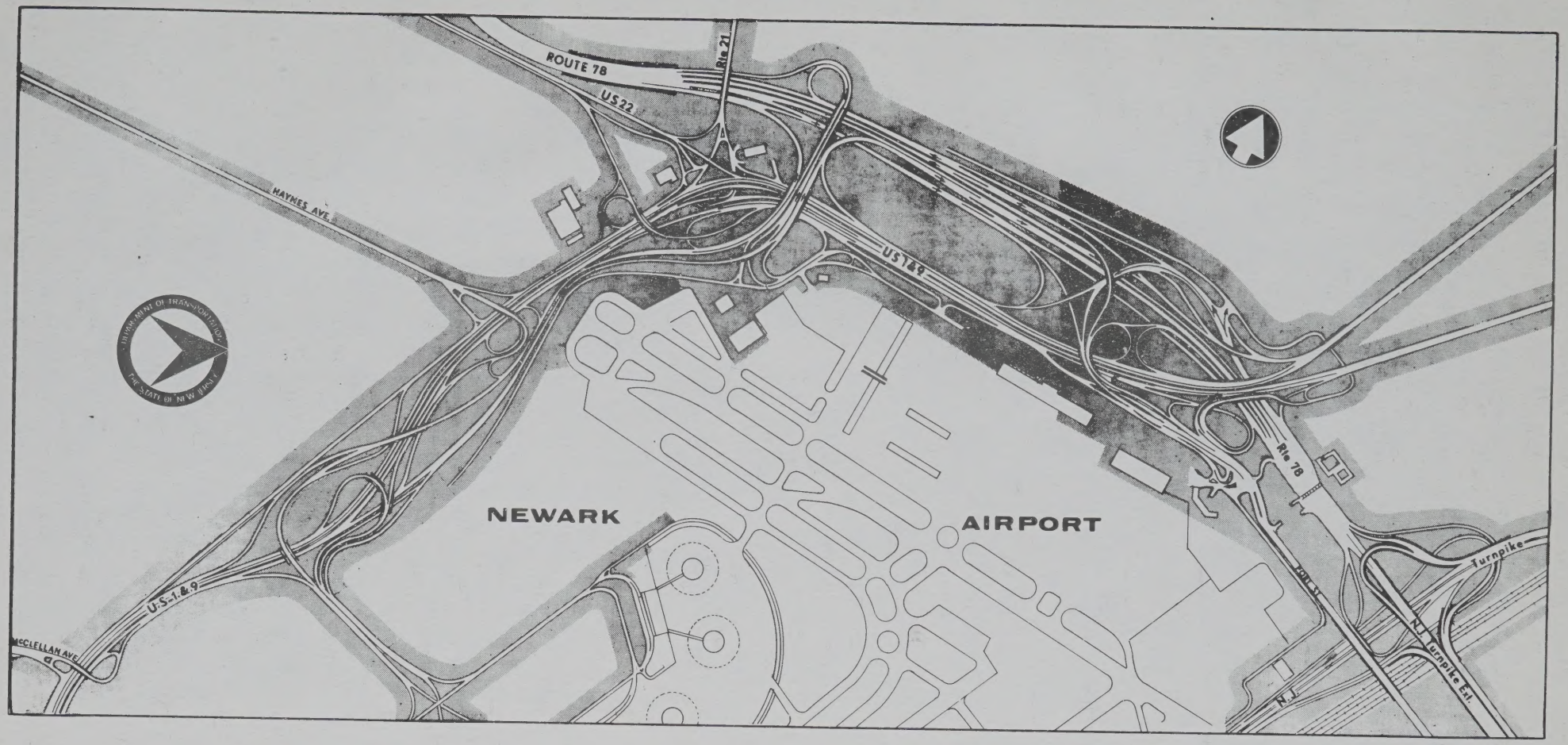
Route 1 & 9, which is eight lanes in the interchange area, is calculated for 66,000 in 1975 and 89,200 in 1985.

Route U. S. 22, which had an ADT of 63,650 in 1968 but which will rise to an estimated 68,000 in 1975 even though Route 78 is opened, will rise to 77,500 by 1985.

Route 21, which will increase from its 1968 level of 42,550 to 56,000 in 1975, will rise again to 64,000 in 1985.

The Turnpike will go from 222,000 in 1969 to 265,000 in 1975 and to 367,300 in 1985.

Route I-78 will extend 66.2 miles across New Jersey from Phillipsburg on the Delaware River to the Holland Tunnel. Its total cost is estimated at more than $322 million. To date, in excess of $185 million has been expended. More than half of the highway in New Jersey, 35.9 miles, is open to traffic. Another 16.1 miles are under construction, 11.8 miles miles are under design, and 2.4 miles under preliminary study.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